(iii) Support to commercial production (compost) units;

(iv) Training programme and field demonstrations;

(v) Market development and promotion.

Agriculture Research and Education Centres

345. SHRI SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1343, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st August, 2003 and state:

(a) the details of basic infrastructure provided by the agriculture research and education centres; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to upgrade these research centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Basic infrastructure is not provided by the Agriculture Research and Education Centres to any other unit.

(b) To upgrade these research centres, support is provided mainly through Plan and Non-Plan grants for infrastructure and scientific and technical inputs.

Insurance cover for yield and price fluctuations

346. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a new insurance cover for yield and price fluctuations for farmers under a single policy;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) by when it is likely to be put in operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In order to cover the two critical components of a farmer's income, namely yield and price through a single insurance scheme, the Government of India proposes to implement a Pilot Project on Farm Income Insurance Scheme

(FIIS) during Rabi 2003-2004 season for wheat and rabi rice. The main features of the Pilot Project are:—

(i) A farmer's production and price risk for the crop produced by him, would be protected by ensuring minimum guaranted income. If the actual income as a product of yield recorded during the season multiplied by prevailing market price fall short of the guaranted income per hectare (Average yield of past 7 years X indemnity level X MSP of current year) the farmer would be eligible for compensation to the extent of the difference between the guaranted income and the actual income.

(ii) The Pilot Project would cover Wheat and Rabi rice only in selected districts.

(iii) Procurement at MSP will be withdrawn in these districts in respect of the selected crops.

(iv) As under the NAIS, the FIIS would be compulsory for farmers availing seasonal agricultural operations loans from financial institutions and optional for non-loanee farmers.

(v) A premium subsidy of 75% is proposed to be given in case of small and marginal farmers and 50% for other farmers.

(vi) The pilot project will be implemented by the Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC), New Delhi.

Assistance to SC/ST farmers of M.P.

347. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to release the fund from the contingency fund to help the SCs/STs and Backward agriculturists in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) No, Sir.